

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

George Fischer Sloane, Inc.

Arkansas Manufacturing Solutions

George Fischer Sloane Inc.'s Lean Efforts Flow Quickly Throughout Its Operation

Client Profile:

George Fischer Sloane Inc. (GFS) is a manufacturer of plastic pipe fittings. GFS is the North American manufacturing site of George Fischer Piping Systems. They manufacture components and systems for industrial gas and water distribution applications. Currently, GFS employs 200 people at the Little Rock, Arkansas, facility.

Situation:

GFS was impacted by the poor economic conditions of 2000-2001, causing hardship in the business. A need for change was apparent, and the company contacted Arkansas Manufacturing Solutions, a NIST MEP network affiliate, for help.

Solution:

AMS Project Managers met with GFS Vice President of Manufacturing, Paul Mastro, and other George Fischer Sloane associates in March of 2004 to decide on an implementation plan for expanding the Lean Manufacturing initiative which was started in mid 2002. The plan consisted of basic Lean 101 classes, Value Stream Mapping (VSM) training, and application of these Lean principles on the Fuseal product line. In addition, plans for moving the line into a more productive cell configuration was scheduled. After initial classroom training with supervisors and key employees, Kaizen events started to happen at GFS. The first event was to "VSM" the Fuseal line. From the VSM, it was determined that the Fuseal line could best benefit with the implementation of cell technology and better Kanban systems. AMS and the GFS associates overhauled the Fuseal cell in the summer of 2004. Improvements in lead time and productivity were almost immediately seen. GFS continues to look for Lean improvements. Additional events to expand the 5S effort and apply Lean to the office processes are scheduled for 2006.

Results:

- * Increased productivity by 20 percent.
- * Reduced inventory by over \$350,000.
- * Decreased product travel from over 4000 feet to less than 400 feet.
- * Decreased Kanban levels from months to days.
- * Reduced assembly cell from 6 stations to 2 stations.
- * Developed new products.
- * Improved shipping time and level of quality.

Testimonial:

"In the first year (the Lean effort initiated by GF) saved us more than one-half million in costs. The second year, with AMS' assistance, we saved another \$400,000. Last year (the Lean team) found

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more than \$100,000. They are to a point now where they have gone back a second and third time for some of the products. Because we've had success, the rest of the plant is open to doing it. What you want as a result is for people to learn the techniques as they go through the improvement process. Then they can carry those techniques to other projects in the shop."

Paul Mastro, Vice President, Manufacturing